

Illinois Early Learning Council (ELC) Quality Committee

Facilitated by Co-Chairs Dan Harris and Teri Talan

Tuesday, July 21, 2020

11:30 AM- 1:30 PM

Attendees:

Alice Giordano	Diane King	Luz Maria Solis
Amanda Heinz	Donna Emmons	Marge Holland
Brenda Smith	Elva DeLuna	Martha Cerda-Babbington
Cathy Main	Emily Ropars	Melissa Batchelor
Cathy Manne	Erika Mendez	Melissa Johnson
Cindy Berrey	Jill Enchelmayer	Melissa Szymczak
Cindy Mahr	Joni Scritchlow	Penny Smith
Cindy Wall	Joshua Kaufman	Sinthu Ramalingam
Cornelia Grumman	Joyce Weiner	Tamara Sanders-Carter
Dan Harris	Kathy Slattery	Teri Talan
Debrah Clark	Lauri Morrison-Frichtl	Tom Layman
Denise Murray	Lisa Downey	Wendy Uptain

Welcome & Introductions – Dan Harris, INCCRRA and Teri Talan, MCECL, Co-Chairs

- December 17, 2019 meeting notes accepted. One name correction. Any further edits/revisions to the meeting notes should be sent to jenchelmayer@inccrra.org.

Initiatives/Key Highlights from State Partners:

Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development

- No report from an IDCFS representative available.

Illinois Department of Human Services – Cindy Wall, IDHS

- Dealing with many activities around COVID-19 pandemic, from March to present.
 - OECD has been addressing various activities to ensure services can continue for parents and providers.
 - Adjustments made to CCAP during COVID-19 pandemic. Most have returned to “normal”.
 - Partnered with INCCRRA on one-time emergency child care stipends for providers who offered care for essential workers.
 - Worked with CCR&Rs to make sure services have and will continue while most staff are working remotely.
 - Partnering with INCCRRA and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity on the Child Care Restoration Grant.
 - Working with GOECD on PDG B-5 Grant.

Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

- No report from an IDCFS representative available.

Illinois State Board of Education – Tamara Sanders-Carter (on behalf of Carisa Hurley), ISBE

- Today they will be putting out additional guidance for ECBG programs with the re-opening in the fall. Guidance will address class size, monitoring, etc.

Illinois Community College Board – Marcus Brown, ICCB

- No report from an ICCB representative available.

Illinois Board of Higher Education – Stephanie Bernoteit (not present, but provided resources below)

- Higher Education in Illinois: Safely Launching Academic Year 2020
 - <https://www.ibhe.org/Safely-Launching-Academic-Year-2020.html>
- IBHE information and resources in response to matters pertaining to the Coronavirus (COVID-19)
 - <https://www.ibhe.org/IBHE-DG-Institutions-Covi19.html>

Advocacy Partners - Maria Estlund, IAFC

- Session held in May to pass FY 21 budget which started on July 21, 2020.
 - Early childhood funding did not receive cuts, rather there are increases in funding.
 - Early Intervention received \$12M increase, for case load demand and rate increases, etc.
 - CCDBG received flat funding from the previous year.
 - Focus was on budget and major priorities, so they were not able to discuss the resolution IAFC pushed through on early childhood compensation and the need to align priorities and investments across all types of early childhood.
- Advocates have organized a large and growing coalition to advocate for the commission to come up with recommendations that support quality a highly qualified workforce.
 - Anyone interested in joining the coalition should contact Maria.
- Continuing to do Congressional outreach and advocacy to make sure the federal government is investing in early childhood and pushing money to the state.
 - Supportive of a national advocate's ask for \$50 Billion to stabilize the childcare sector and the hope is to see a new relief package coming soon.
 - Optimistic about this work and receiving at least some funding and that early childhood will be a priority.

ELC Quality Subcommittee Report: ExceleRate – Tom Layman, GOECD

- ExceleRate Childcare Pilot has been launched. Eligible centers have been contacted. There have been many expressions of interest, with only a few centers saying they are not interested. Centers expressing interest are receiving explanation about requirements and funding associated with the pilot.
 - Funding for this pilot is through PDG B-5, and a partnership with IDHS, McCormick Center, and INCCRRA.
 - Eligible centers are those in CCAP Group 2 - mostly rural counties that have been serving at least 40% CCAP children.
 - Pilot is testing the recommendations from the subcommittee to look at ExceleRate standards and supports in two parts – staffing and professional practice.
 - Staffing: In order to implement ExceleRate standards, programs need adequate and stable staffing. This is a huge challenge right now, especially in rural areas.
 - Project will offer contracts to eligible centers in order to pay higher salaries for staff, to stabilize employment and increase the number of staff. Staff will then have time to meet, reflect, make plans, to experiment, and implement the new standards.
 - Professional practice: There is a focus with the new standards on continuous quality improvement. Some areas that need to be addressed in relationship to continuous quality improvement in the area of leadership are Leadership Essentials, Administrative Leadership, and Pedagogical Leadership.
 - Leadership Essentials – workplace climate and culture – what the top leaders do to establish a culture of improvement. The pilot provides some standards and supports for

- leaders in the centers, including the Early Childhood Work Environment Survey to give them some initial data they might choose to use in their improvement plans.
- Administrative Leadership – Ask administrators to complete ARPS (Administrator Role Perception Survey) to answer questions about where they feel strong, where they could use some help, etc. This survey will provide them with some initial data on the administrative side, that they might use to improve. McCormick Center will provide with some initial data and some initial counseling on how they could learn more as administrators and also what the data means.
- Pedagogical Leadership - Team reflections – leaders will be provided with base line ERS data. This will not be the valid total ERS assessment, because of COVID-19, but McCormick Center assessment team has figured out what aspects of the ERS tools leaders can orient staff to and collect data on, through photographs and virtual means.
- Subcommittee is testing the idea of not using assessments or using them more sparingly to determine ExceleRate Circles of Quality, but use them instead to provide baseline data for programs that will be confidential to programs and not shared with the public.
- Initial list of 49 eligible programs using INCCRRA data. There has been initial interest from 40+ programs, but budgeted for 25. May be drop off as programs find out what they are expected to do.
 - Some programs can choose more intensive technical assistance and coaching. There is funding for Pyramid Model training and coaching and funding for Early Choices to do some supports around children with disabilities. Programs at a level where they can implement these more intensive initiatives will invited to apply for those supports. Primarily testing first steps for quality improvement right now.
- Subcommittee is starting to discuss how to pilot to FCC programs as well.
 - Juliet Bromer from Erikson Institute gave a presentation about a national project they've been involved in involving family childcare networks.
- Additional comment from Teri, as co-chair of ExceleRate Subcommittee – We're piloting not just some new standards, but also piloting new ways of operating. COVID has pushed the committee even further to be innovative in how they address continuous quality improvement.

PDG B-5 Update – Dan Harris

- This grant effort is in its 2nd year
 - IL was awarded \$3.7 million in the first year
 - This grant is about filling slots and more about structure and capacity building at the infrastructure level, at the administrative level.
 - IL awarded a \$13.4 million annual renewal grant. Total of \$40.2 million.
 - We are in the first year of the renewal grant.
- Efforts across 5 activities
 - State-wide B-5 needs assessment
 - State-wide strategic plan
 - Maximum parental choice and knowledge
 - Share best practices
 - Improve overall quality
- Visit GOECD website – renewal grant application is posted and includes detail about all initiatives being funded through first year \$13.4 million funding.

- Funding comes from the US Department of Health and Human Services and flows through ISBE.
- INCCRRA efforts funded by grant (some carried over from first year grant to renewal grant)
 - IL Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Group – Orientation and reflective learning groups – Headed up by Beth Knight
 - College course modularization – Headed up by Joni Scritchlow
 - Work of IL Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Group being incorporated into DTP (INCCRRA’s Data Tracking Program).
 - Efforts to improving home visiting – Headed up by Beth Knight
 - Pyramid Model Training and Trainers Registry
 - Funding is supporting work towards a Home Visitor Credential
 - Enhancing the ExceleRate website – Toni Porter is working with Tom Layman around updating electronic materials for some ExceleRate pilot sites.

PDG B-5 Funded Projects – Joni Scritchlow

- **Cohorts** – Anticipating a press release from Illinois Board of Higher Education that highlights institutions selected – Jill Enchelmayer will share with Quality Committee once it is ready.
 - RFP was released in May. Excellent response from institutions from all over IL
 - Funding opportunity to advance models that support workforce attainment of degrees/credentials/licensure.
 - Range of pathways/models proposed, from public and private institutions, diversity of student representation, good geographic representation.

Note: The PDG funded recently published the “Higher Education Cohorts” report. It is specific to Illinois cohorts and can be found here:

<https://www.ilgateways.com/docman-docs/professional-development/higher-education-programs/ece-toolbox/1956-higher-education-cohort/file>
- **Modularization** – RFP announced to all public and private, two and four-year institutions who have early childhood programs. Received more than needed applications – challenging for the nine-member review team to choose, as there were many strong applications. Institutions were notified July 1, of their application status.
 - Funding available for 5 institutions.
 - Institutions chosen:
 - Heartland Community College
 - Illinois State University
 - Moraine Valley Community College
 - Northern Illinois University
 - National Louis University
 - Taking Gateways ECE Credential and looking at Competencies and thinking about how to use a CBE approach.
 - The work done by the 5 institutions will serve as a platform to provide opportunity to all IL institutions in the state.
 - Key aspect – placing competencies into online coursework – advancing online accessibility.
 - Kick-off meeting last week. Work launches August 3.
 - Will benefit all HEIs in state if they choose to access or utilize any portion of it.

- The outcomes from this work will be shared in a report.
- **Credential fee waiver**
 - \$65 application fee waived
 - Announced June 15 – Shared with HEI faculty, on Facebook, email, etc.
 - Within two weeks, INCCRRA received 700+ applications (300% increase for June). July will show an even higher increase.
 - Many applicants are immediately eligible based on education and training already on file at INCCRRA.
 - There is funding for approximately 3,750 Credential fee waivers: first come, first serve

Funding Commission – Dan Harris

- Formally known as the Illinois Commission on Equitable Early Childhood Education and Care Funding
- Appointed by Governor Pritzker in December 2019
- Meet monthly
- Charge: The Commission shall study and make recommendations to establish funding goals and funding mechanisms to provide equitable access to high quality early childhood education and care services for all children birth to age five and advise the governor in planning and implementing these recommendations.
- Formed four working groups that also meet on monthly basis
 - Funding Adequacy
 - Funding Mechanism
 - Inclusion
 - Management and Oversight
- So far, there have been recommendations from working groups to commission, but mainly discussion of ideas
- The Commission will formally produce a report that is due in January 2021
- Four working groups work:
 - Funding Adequacy – At the last full commission meeting, this group presented about how much it would cost to provide equitable access to quality early care and education for children birth to age five. The group suggested \$10.6 billion in government spending would be needed (not included parent contribution). State currently spends \$1.9 billion on publicly funded early care and education.
 - Funding Mechanism – Focus on how money should flow and the extent the money should be blended and braided at the state or regional level.
 - Inclusion – Presented recommendations to the full commission around a formula mechanism for providing contacts for inclusion services versus current fee for service model.
 - Management and Oversight – Has shared back how the state should organize itself around early childhood education and care programs. State-wide programs are administered through different agencies (ex: CCAP administered through IDHS, licensing administered through IDCFS, PFA administered through ISBE, etc).
 - Discussion of three models of governance of state programs
 - Programs sit in different agencies with a central entity that coordinates the work of these agencies. This is similar to current program with the GOECD facilitating, coordination, and communication amongst different agencies.
 - Recommendation to move towards centralized model of state agencies. Move to state agency or form new state agency?

- GOECD website (www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/Pages/Governor's-Early-Childhood-Funding-Commission.aspx) provides information about this commission. All meeting materials and meeting minutes are posted. There are schedules for full commission and working group meetings, including call-in information (these are public meetings). There is also a public comments section. Next full commission meeting is August 18, noon-2:00pm.

Early Educator Investment Collaborative (EEIC) – Teri Talan

- Funding opportunity to transform systems to prepare early childhood lead teachers.
 - Two-year grant, beginning January-April 2021
- National initiative – an opportunity for a four-year institution to apply/submit a letter of interest
- Goal of proposal was to transform state systems that prepare early childhood lead teachers, with an emphasis on pathways, diversity, maintaining equity, transforming the system, etc.
- NLU volunteered to prepare and submit a proposal – complicated Letter of Interest – 123 pages, including attachments.
 - Illinois already had a state competency leadership team that could serve as the oversight and advisory body.
 - Proposal submitted with collaboration with the partner organizations (state agencies, higher education institutions, and advocacy partners) that are a part of the state competency leadership team.
 - Invited to submit a full proposal, which must be submitted by September
 - Request for \$4,739,000
 - Proposed \$500,000 to support addition to Gateways Registry, to collect learner records on competencies of the work force.
 - NLU proposing a mass move to improving online experience with the Infant Toddler Credential, Illinois Director Credential, Family Childcare Credential - building on the modularization - to supplement what's going on with the PDG modularization work with the ECE Credential.
 - Half of money to be awarded as sub-contracts to other HEIs, to fund what they want to do to take their next steps towards fully embedding competency-based education in their institutions.
 - State leadership team will play a guidance and oversight role in how those sub-grants are made.
- Lisa Downey, Director of Undergraduate Teacher Preparation, NLU – Lead on proposal
 - Lisa added that there are additional secondary items in proposal such as coaching and induction support.
- Teri thanked state partners and state competency leadership team for support.

Summary/Next Steps

- Next FY21 meeting dates will be shared with meeting notes.
- There is a possibility of moving to a Zoom format for future meetings.

Adjourn